

ENGEL

A Comparative Study
Of Longfellow's Sonnets

English

A. M.

1909

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
LIBRARY

Class

1909

Book

En3

Volume

Ja 09-20M



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF LONGFELLOW'S SONNETS

BY

LLOYD EDWIN ENGEL

A. B. University of Illinois, 1904

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

IN ENGLISH

IN

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

1909

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

May 29, 1909.

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

Lloyd Edwin Engel

ENTITLED - A Comparative Study of Longfellow's Sonnets

BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF Master of Arts

S. K. Dodge

In Charge of Major Work

C. M. Greenough

Head of Department

Recommendation concurred in:

H. S. V. Jones

Stewart Sherman

C. M. Greenough

Committee

on

Final Examination



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2013

<http://archive.org/details/comparativestudy00enge>

409
En3

C O N T E N T S .

Introduction.

The sonnet very exacting.

Longfellow.

Number of sonnets.- Translation.- Original.- Sonnets arranged chronologically.- Division into groups.- Longfellow's style.- Years productive of sonnets.- Rhyme scheme in translations.- In original sonnets.

Lowell.

Number of sonnets.- Groups.- Rhyme schemes.

Whittier.

Number of sonnets.- Groups.- Rhyme schemes.

Holmes.

Number of sonnets.- Use of Petrarchan form.

Emerson.

Few sonnets.- Freedom of form.

Some of the Minor American Sonneteers prior to 1850.

John G. C. Brainard.- Wm Plumer, Jr.- Mrs. Oakes Smith.- Jas.

G. Percival, Esq.- Mrs. E. C. Embury.- "Quince".- H. W.

Rockwell.- Wm. Pitt Palmer.- Mrs. E. C. Stedman.- Mary E.

Hewitt.- Mrs. E. C. Kinney.- Hans von Spiegel.- Thos. Mackellar

Other writers.- Rhyme schemes of sonnets examined.- Regular

Petrarchan form.- Elizabethan form.- Miscellaneous forms.-

Carless construction.- Subject matter.- Most sonnets written
between 1835-50.- Critical attitude toward the sonnet.

Conclusion.

Introduction.-

The sonnet is a form of poetical expression which has been attempted by many, but mastered by few. Since the days of Petrarch, to the present time, we have had many sonnets of far different degrees of perfection; and in America this is especially true, even during her short period of national life. Furthermore, the perfect sonnet cannot be dashed off "at a heat"; it must be studied, polished and repolished until it fulfills its special requirements. Although many sonnets were written in America during the nineteenth century, our writers have been more successful with those simpler verse forms which are more easily written. Nevertheless, the American poets have written sonnets, which in form and thought are excellent productions in this branch of literary expression. In the following pages we shall trace the development of the sonnet in America during the first half of the nineteenth century by an examination of the works of the different writers of this period, and, through a comparative study, show the real place that the sonnet holds in our early national literature.

Longfellow.-

Longfellow is our leading sonneteer. He is, in fact, the greatest master of the form and finish of the sonnet in American letters, while, at the same time, with the exception of the greatest he compares favorably with the sonneteers of English letters. The sonnet was a favorite form of literary expression for his inmost thoughts and tenderest feelings; in it were enshrined his deepest griefs as well as his greatest joys.

Number of sonnets.- Longfellow wrote sixty three (63) original sonnets, including one in Italian, and translated twenty one (21) sonnets from different languages. The following is a list of his sonnet translations arranged chronologically:

From the Spanish.

The Disembodied Spirit	published Oct. 1831.
Ideal Beauty	Dec. 1831.
The Lover's Complaint	Dec. 1831.
Art and Nature	Oct. 1832.
The Two Harvests	Nov. 1832.
The Good Shepherd	(month not known) 1832.
To-morrow	1832.
The Native Land	1832.
The Image of God	1832.
The Brook	1832.
Clear Honor of the Liquid Element	Aug. 1833.

From the Italian.

To Italy	1865.
I. The Artist	Jan. 30, 1874.
II. Fire	1874.
III. Youth and Age	1874.
IV. Old Age	1874.
V. To Vittoria Colonna	1874.
VI. To Vittoria Colonna	1874.
VII. Dante	1874.

From the French.

A Quiet Life	Sept. 11, 1879.
Will ever the dear days come back again?	1882.

Original Sonnets.

Mezzo Cammin	Aug. 25, 1842.
The Evening Star	Oct. 30, 1845.
Autumn	Nov. 11, 1845.
Dante	1845.

On Mrs. Kemble's Readings from Shakespeare Feb. 20, 1849.

The following six sonnets introduced the three parts of Longfellow's Divina Commedia:

Divina Commedia.

I.	March 29, 1864.
II.	March 29, 1864.
III.	Dec. 22, 1865.
IV.	May 5, 1867.
V.	Jan. 16, 1866.
VI.	March 7, 1866.
Giotto's Tower	Jan. 8, 1866.
To-morrow	Feb. 17, 1866.
Milton	Nov. 13, 1873.
Shakespeare	Nov. 15, 1873.
Chaucer	Nov. 16, 1873.
Keats	Dec. 4, 1873.
The Sound of the Sea.	July 27, 1874.
A Summer Day by the Sea	July 1874.

The Galaxy	Aug.	4, 1874.
The Tides	Sept.	4, 1874.
A Shadow		1874.

Three Friends of Mine.

I.	Sept.	5, 1874.
II.	Sept.	6, 1874.
III.	Sept.	1874.
IV.	June	15, 1874.
V.	June	5, 1874.
The Old Bridge at Florence	Nov.	8, 1874.
Ponte Vecchio de Firenze	Nov.	26, 1874.
A Nameless Grave	Nov.	30, 1874.
Sleep	April	7, 1875.
Victor and Vanquished	April	4, 1876.
Nature		1876.
In the Church-yard at Tarrytown		1876.
Eliot's Oak		1876.
The Descent of the Muses	Oct.	11, 1876.
Venice		1876.
The Poets		1876.
Parker Cleveland		1876.
The Harvest Moon		1876.
To the River Rhone		1876.
I. The Two Rivers		1876.
II. The Two Rivers		1876.
III. The Two Rivers		1876.
IV. The Two Rivers		1876.

Boston	1876.
St John's, Cambridge	1876.
Moods	1876.
Woodstock Park	1876.
The Four Princesses at Wilna	1876.
The Broken Oar	Nov. 13, 1876.
Wapentake	1877.
Holidays	May 10, 1877.
The Three Silences of Molinos	Dec. 18, 1877.
The Burial of the Poet	Feb. 10, 1879.
Night	April 18, 1879.
My Cathedral	April 20, 1879.
The Cross of Snow	July 10, 1879.
Chimes	Aug. 28, 1879.
Memories	Sept. 18, 1881.
President Garfield	Oct. 6, 1881.
My Books	Dec. 27, 1881.
Possibilities	Jan. 17, 1882.

Groups.- It is difficult to make an exact classification of Longfellow's sonnets, because a number of them might be included in one group as well as in another, and, furthermore, because of a frequent overlapping. In each case the dominant element has been made the basis of the classification.

PERSONAL.

Mezzo Cammin

The Evening Star

To-morrow

A Shadow

Three Friends of Mine

In the Church-yard at Tarrytown

Parker Cleveland

The Burial of the Poet

The Cross of Snow

Memories

President Garfield

LITERARY.

Dante

Divina Commedia

I. IV.

II. V.

III. VI.

Milton

Shakespeare

Chaucer

Keats

The Poets

Wapentake

Possibilities

NATURE.

Autumn

The Sound of the Sea (personal application)

A Summer Day by the Sea

The Tides

Eliot's Oak

The Harvest Moon

To the River Rhone

My Cathedral

CONTEMPLATIVE AND SPIRITUAL.

Victor and Vanquished

Nature

The Two Rivers

I. III.

II. IV.

Moods

Night

Chimes

My Books

Holidays

PLACE.

Giotto's Tower

Venice

The Old Bridge at Florence

Ponte Vecchio de Firenze

Boston

St John's, Cambridge

Woodstock Park

OCCASIONAL

The Descent of the Muses

On Mrs. Kemble's Readings from Shakespeare

The Three Silences of Molinos

MISCELLANEOUS.

The Galaxy

A Nameless Grave

Sleep

The Four Princesses of Wilna

The Broken Oar

Longfellow's style.- The sonnet was one of Longfellow's favorite forms for the expression of his tenderest emotions. For simplicity, unity and loftiness of purpose, his sonnets have never been excelled in America.

Of Longfellow's sonnets, James Russell Lowell wrote:

"I have been struck particularly with this quality of style in some of my late friend's sonnets, which seem to me in unity and evenness of flow among the most beautiful and perfect we have in the language. They remind one of those cabinets in which all the drawers are opened at once by the turn of the key in a single lock; whereas we all have seen sonnets with a lock in every line, with a different key to each, and the added conundrums of secret drawers."¹

For beauty of language and description, we may take "The Evening Star." written in 1845.

1. James Russell Lowell, A Biography, by H. E. Scudder, Vol. II, p. 306.

"Lo! in the painted oriel of the West,
Whose panes the sunken sun incarnadines,
Like a fair lady at her casement, shines
The evening star, the star of love and rest!
And then anon she doth herself divest
Of all her radiant garments, and reclines
Behind the sombre screen of yonder pines,
With slumber and soft dreams of love oppressed.
O my beloved, my sweet Hesperus!
My morning and my evening star of love!
My best and gentlest lady! ever thus,
As that fair planet in the sky above,
Dost thou retire unto thy rest at night,
And from thy darkened window fades the light."

The beauty of this early sonnet was never surpassed. On the other hand, Longfellow's powers never failed him even in his last years. He shows this same keen appreciation of nature and art in an old age unmarred by the stress of time.

Again, for nature and rural scenes, the sonnet, "Chaucer," written in 1873 furnishes a striking example.

"An old man in a lodge within a park;
The chamber walls depicted all around
With portraitures of huntsmen, hawk and hound,-
And the hurt deer. He listeneth to the lark,
Whose song comes with the sunshine through the dark
Of painted glass in leaden lattice bound;

He listeneth and he laugheth at the sound,
Then writeth in a book like any clerk.
He is the poet of the dawn, who wrote
The Canterbury Tales, and his old age
Made beautiful with song; and as I read
I hear the crowing cock. I hear the note
Of lark and linnet, and from every page
Rose odors of ploughed fields or flowery mead."

"Memories," one of his last sonnets, is remarkable for the beautiful sentiment expressed:

"Oft I remember those whom I have known
In other days, to whom my heart was led
As by a magnet, and who are not dead
But absent, and their memories overgrown
With other thoughts and troubles of my own,
As graves with grasses are, and at their head
The stone with moss and lichens so o'er spread,
Nothing is legible but the name alone.
And it is so with them? After long years,
Do they remember me in the same way,
And is the memory pleasant as to me?
I fear to ask; yet wherefore are my fears?
Pleasures, like flowers, may wither and decay,
And yet the root perennial may be."

Years productive of sonnets.- Longfellow's first original sonnet, "Mezzo Cammin," was written August 25, 1842, during his

third visit to the continent. His second visit was saddened at Rotterdam by the death of his wife, to whom he refers in lines seven and eight.

In 1836, Longfellow began his duties as Professor of Modern Languages and Literature at Harvard College. July 13, 1843, he married Frances Elizabeth Appleton of Boston, to whom the sonnet, "The Evening Star" is addressed. It is of interest to know that this sonnet is Longfellow's one love poem.

During this same year, two more sonnets were produced, and in 1849, another, after which no more were written until 1864. These intervening years were occupied in writing "Evangeline," "The Golden Legend," "Hiawatha," "The Courtship of Miles Standish," and parts of the "Tales of a Wayside Inn," together with many of his shorter poems, so there was little time left for sonnets.

After the tragic death of his second wife in July, 1861, Longfellow felt the need of occupying his thoughts along some systematic line of study, so he again took up, in 1864, the translation of the "Divine Comedy." This suggested the six sonnets which introduce the three parts of the poem, besides the sonnet, "To-morrow." The latter was written after one of the Dante Club meetings, which were held regularly at Longfellow's home. His great grief was still fresh in his mind, but he only bows his head in his meekness of spirit and feels that God knows what is best.

1873 was productive of four (4) literary sonnets. In all, thirteen (13) sonnets were written in 1874. It was Longfellow's custom to spend his summers in travel or by the seashore. July, August and part of September of this year were spent at his summer

home at Nahant on the coast of Massachusetts. Here he wrote, "The Galaxy," "The Tides," and probably three of the group entitled, "Three Friends of Mine"; the rest were written at Cambridge. Longfellow's sonnets, as well as his other poems of this year, show that he gave himself up for a time to meditation and retrospection.

Let us examine a little more closely several individual sonnets. The five sonnets entitled "Three Friends of Mine." are a tribute to the memory of Fulton, Agassiz and Charles Sumner. The friendship between these men and Longfellow was beautiful, their lives were so knit together by social intercourse that he felt their loss keenly. Felton and Longfellow occupied rooms in the same house in Cambridge when Longfellow began his Professorship there in 1836. The friendship which sprang up between them continued through life. In his Journal of March 4, 1862, Longfellow writes: "Felton's funeral from the college chapel. So passes away the learned scholar, the genial companion, the affectionate, faithful friend." ¹ Agassiz and Longfellow were fellow-townsmen at Cambridge, and both had summer homes at Nahant; but of all of Longfellow's friends none were closer and dearer than Charles Sumner. Sumner was always received with open arms into Longfellow's home, where many pleasant dinners and parties were given in his honor. These two men were always free to criticize each other's works for the purpose of improvement and helpfulness. When the news of Sumner's death came, Longfellow wrote, "I had a telegram with the words, Charles Sumner is dead. I thought I was prepared

1. Life and Letters Vol. III, p. 4.

by his frequent attacks for this final one; but I was not. It is¹ terrible, sudden and unexpected to me. I cannot write more."

Twenty (20) sonnets and seven (7) poems were written in 1876, which is Longfellow's banner year. The subjects are varied.

The sonnet to Irving was written seventeen years after the death of the humorist. On his first visit abroad in 1827, Longfellow met Irving at Madrid. The friendship here formed proved to be a lasting one. He wrote of him in this year: "Irving is one of those men who put you at ease with them in a moment...He is a² very fine man in society, all mirth and good humor."

In 1877, Longfellow wrote three (3) sonnets; in 1879, five (5). "The Cross of Snow," written in the latter year, is a beautiful tribute to the memory of his wife who had died eighteen years before. While one day looking over an illustrated book of Western scenery, his attention was drawn to a picture of the Mt. of the Holy Cross. That evening as he gazed upon the pictured likeness of his dead wife, the thoughts framed themselves into the sonnet. Through all the eighteen years he had borne his sorrow in silence. Even to his closest friends, he could not speak of it. The deepest grief of a human soul is revealed in the closing lines.

"Such is the cross I wear upon my breast

These eighteen years, through all the changing scenes

And seasons, changeless since the day she died."

Longfellow's activities did not cease until his last days. On January 17, 1882, about the same time that his last

1. Life and Letters Vol. III, p. 224.

2. Life and Letters Vol I, p. 108.

translation was made, he wrote his last sonnet, "Possibilities." On March twenty-fourth of this same year, he died.

Rhyme schemes in translations.- Where the material was available, a comparison has been made between the original rhyme schemes and Longfellow's translations.

From the Spanish.

Original.	Translation.
a b b a a b b a c d e c d e (2)	a b b a c d d c e f g e f g (2)
a b b a a b b a c d c d c d	a b b a c b b c d e e d f f
a b b a a b b a c d c d c d	a b b a c d d c e f f g e g
a b b a a b b a c d e c d e	a b b a c d c d e f g e f g
a b b a a b b a c d e c d e	a b b a c d d c e f f e g g
a b b a a b b a c d e c e d	a b b a c d d c e f f e g g
a b b a a b b a c d e c d e	a b b a c d d c e f f g g e
- - - - -	a b b a c d d c e f f e g g
- - - - -	a b b a c d d c e f g e f g (2)

None of the original sonnets from the French and the Italian were found.

From the French.

From the Italian.

a b b a a b b a c d e c d e		c d e d c e
a b b a a b b a c c d e e d	a b b a a b b a	c d e c d e (6)
		c d c d c d

In none of the translations from the Spanish, then, so far as our examination goes, has Longfellow followed the original in the rhyme scheme. Again, the final couplet was used three times

in g g and once in f f . The two sonnets from the French, and all from the Italian are written in the Petrarchan form.

Rhyme Schemes in original sonnets.- Without exception Longfellow has followed the Petrarchan model in his sixty-three (63) original sonnets. This seems the more striking when we remember his free and almost careless treatment of the true Petrarchan model in the Spanish translations. The variations of the rhymes in the sestet are given below:

c d c d c d (9)

c d c d e e (1)

a b b a a b b a c d e c d e (51)

c c d e e d (1)

c d d c e e (1)

The c d e combination in the sestet, then, is Longfellow's favorite form, while the c d rhyme follows in nine (9) sonnets. Again only twice has he used the final couplet e e .

Lowell.-

Lowell stands second as an American sonneteer. In his collected works, fifty-eight (58) sonnets, including one sonnet sequence of four(4) and one of two (2) sonnets, were found.

Groups.- Lowell's sonnets may be divided into (a) personal, (b) literary, (c) nature, (d) miscellaneous. In form and content they are similar to those of Longfellow, because, perhaps, of the common interests of the two poets in the same literature and languages. In the rhymes, however, Lowell shows a gradual development from the irregular to the regular or legitimate forms. As

a rule, he used three rhymes in the octave in his earlier sonnets. The table shows the rhymes in both the octave and the sestet.

	d e d e d e (4)
	d e f e g g
a b b a a c c a	d e f d e f
	d e d e f f (6)

Lowell felt great interest in Elizabethan life and literature. It may be, in part, because of this fact, that he followed the Elizabethan type of sonnet as well as the Petrarchan. So far as we have been able to determine, Lowell's first Elizabethan sonnet was published in 1843. In six (6) sonnets the Elizabethan model is used. Lowell's later sonnets were written in the Petrarchan form. The variations in the sestet are as follows:

	c d d c e e
	c d e e d c
	c d c d c d (24)
	c d c d d c
a b b a a b b a	c d e c d e (5)
	c d c e d e
	c d e c e d
	c d c d e e

Miscellaneous forms.

a b a b c c d d e f f e g g
a b a b a b a b c d c d c d (2)
a b b a b b a c d c d c d (13 lines)
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n

In the poem of thirteen lines, included by Lowell in his book of sonnets, in which every requirement of the sonnet is satisfied except the number of lines, he has strangely omitted the first rhyme "a" of the second quatrain. In the next case, the poem is composed of fourteen iambic pentameter lines, but with no rhymes. Again, Lowell used the final couplet sixteen (16) times.

Whittier.-

Whittier wrote eighteen (18) sonnets, including one sequence of three (3) sonnets. His religious sonnets which sprang from a devout and reverent nature, form the largest class.

RELIGIOUS

Forgiveness

The Word

The Book

Requirement

Help

Utterance

The Story of Ida

PERSONAL

Leggett's Monument

Bayard Taylor

I.

II.

III.

George Fuller

To a Cape Ann Schooner

OCCASIONAL

Response (written for his 70th birthday)

Godspeed

Norumbega Hall

LITERARY

Prelude to "The Pennsylvania Pilgrim"

Requital

Rhyme schemes.- In his rhyme schemes, Whittier shows a wide divergence from both the Petrarchan and Elizabethan forms.

a b b a c d d c e f f e g g (12)

a b b a c d d c d e e d f f

a b b a c c d e d e f f g g

a b b a a c c c d d e e f f

a b a b b a b c d c b d d c

a b a b c d d c e f e c f f

a b a a b c d d c c e e f f

The final couplet is used in all of his sonnets except one; g g is found thirteen (13) times and f f four (4) times.

Holmes.-

Holmes wrote nine (9) sonnets, most of which are personal. Two sonnet sequences, one of two (2) and another of three (3) sonnets, are included in the list. Except in one case he used only the Petrarchan model.

c d c d d c

a b b a a b b a c d d c d c (2)

c d d c c d (5)

Irregular.- a b a b a a b b c d d c d c

Emerson.-

In Emerson's "Poetical Works," two poems were found which partially fulfill the requirements of the sonnet. Emerson's interest lay in verse forms that permitted greater freedom of treatment, and not in the artificial form of the sonnet, where all rhymes follow fixed rules. This probably accounts for the feeble attempts he made to shape several poems into sonnets.

In the poem beginning, "I bear in youth etc.," all the rules of the sonnet are followed except the rhyme, which is very irregular- a b c b d e d e f g g f h h- following neither the Petrarchan nor the Elizabethan models.

In "Michael Angelo," a translation from the Italian, none of the rules of the sonnet are satisfied except the number of lines. The trimeter, tetrameter and pentameter lines, together with the a a b a b c c d d e e e f f rhyme, show freedom of treatment even of an original form.

Of the five New England poets, then, Longfellow holds the first place in thought and imagery, in the number of sonnets written, and in the strict adherence to the regular model. Lowell, with fifty-eight (58) sonnets, only five (5) less than the number of Longfellow's original sonnets, shows a greater freedom of treatment in his early works, while in his later sonnets he used very successfully both the Elizabethan and the Petrarchan models. In Whittier's eighteen (18) sonnets, we find that neither the Petrarchan nor the Elizabethan model is used; while in the nine (9) sonnets of Holmes, the Petrarchan model is used in all the sonnets except one. In the

two poems, that partially fulfill the requirements of the sonnet, Emerson shows a still greater freedom of treatment than does Whittier. As has already been shown, he neglected the sonnet for those verse forms which can be written without the restriction of definite rules.

Some Minor American Sonneteers prior to 1850.-

The following brief study of some of the minor American sonneteers prior to 1850, is based upon the material found in seventy one (71) volumes of the North American Review from 1815 to 1850, and thirty-four (34) volumes of the Knickerbocker Magazine from 1833 to 1850.

Brainard.- The first sonnet, "To the Sea-Serpent," in the North American Review, was written by John G. C. Brainard in 1825. It is of interest to notice the rhyme scheme- a b a c c d c d d e d e f f- for it is far from being either Petrarchan or Elizabethan. Evidently Brainard had not mastered the essential rules of the sonnet.

In 1841 the North American Review published a sonnet, "The Poet," by James Russell Lowell. The rhyme scheme of this sonnet was that used by Lowell in most of his earlier sonnets,- a b b a a c c a d e d e f f .

Plumer.- William Plumer's sonnets are principally personal and literary. He followed no one form in his rhyme scheme, but he was, nevertheless, regarded as a successful sonneteer, as is shown by the following editorial from the North American Review:

"The poems in this volume are chiefly sonnets..... Sonnets are not generally the most attractive reading; even the best of

those of Petrarch himself...The form of the sonnet is too artificial for our free and bold language easily to yield to; the necessity of confining the thought within a specified number of lines, and when the strict rules are adhered to- arranging the rhymes in a particular order, is too much like a straight jacket for the 'undoubted liberties' of the English muse. But Mr. Plumer's book is exceedingly pleasing. His language is easy flowing and pure....The metrical structure is correct and harmonious. The descriptions are delicately drawn; the reflections well expressed; and the imagery is all of a poetical character.¹"

Again the following year, the editors comment on the ability of Plumer as a sonneteer. "The author writes in a smooth, sustained style, not destitute of poetical beauty. He has well mastered the difficult music of the sonnet."²

Evidently the editors did not hold Plumer to account for not following the legitimate forms of the sonnet, for observe the following rhyme schemes,

a b b a c c d e e d f g g f o r

a b a a b b c c d e d e d d

Mrs Smith.- Mrs. Oakes Smith's two sonnets, in 1849, secured favorable comment from the editors of this same publication. They say in part that the sonnets of Milton are the best specimens in English of this species of verse, although he takes the liberty of departing from the true sonnet and Shakespeare neglects the prescribed recurrence of rhymes. "In America," they continue, "the rules of the sonnet are set at defiance, only that of the

1. N. A. R. Jan. 1842. Vol. LIV, pp. 241-242.

2. N. A. R. July 1843. Vol. LV, p. 248.

number of lines being regarded. Although Mrs. Smith's sonnets are not perfect, they nevertheless possess merit.¹"

As an example of the form this writer followed, notice the following:

a b c a b c d e d d e f e f

Percival.- Mrs. Embury.- "Quince".- The sonnets of James G. Percival, Esquire written about 1833, deserve mention because of a persistency in following the same rhyme scheme. Mrs. Emma C. Embury has left several sonnets, published in the Knickerbocker Magazine of 1836, which show that now and then a writer followed the legitimate form of the sonnet, in this case Elizabethan. The sonnets of "Quince",² written between 1837-41, are also significant in this respect. In the twenty-one (21) sonnets that have been examined, "Quince" followed the Elizabethan form with only one or two exceptions. The titles of the "Cabinet Pictures" are of interest because of their alphabetical arrangement and order.

Adversity	Battle	Calm
Angels	Beauty	Charity
Absence	Bed	Chastity
Age	Birds	Children
Ambition	Blindness	Churchyard
Authors	Blushes	Conscience
Autumn		
Avarice		

1. N. A. R. Apr. 1849. Vol. LXVIII, pp. 430-431.

2. No record of "Quince" could be found in any of the books consulted, so we are left in doubt as to his identity.

It might satisfy our curiosity to know whether or not the "Cabinet Pictures" were ever completed, and, if so, what other sonnets the book contained.

Rockwell.- For twelve years or more H. W. Rockwell of Utica, New York contributed sonnets to the Knickerbocker Magazine. His rhyme schemes were as varied as his subjects. Beginning in 1838 with the a b b a c d d c e f f e g g and a b b a b c c b d e e d f f forms, his sonnets show a development toward the true Italian model. His subjects are interesting:

The Captives	To My Wife	Love's Astronomy
Sonnet	To Devotion	The Thunderstorm
There is One God	The Spirit	autumnal Sonnets (3)
To E. R. F.	Sonnet	
Sayings of Bias	Sonnets to the Mohawk (8)	

Palmer.- As with the last mentioned writer, the sonnet sequence was a favorite form of William Pitt Palmer. In 1838-39, Palmer wrote for the Knickerbocker Magazine a series of six (6) sonnets, "To the Housatonic." His favorite form was :

a b b a a c c a d e e d e d .

Mrs. Stedman.- Mary E. Hewitt.- Mrs. E. C. Stedman's sonnets of the home are all written in the Petrarchan form. Mary E. Hewitt contributed four(4) on the following subjects:

Webster	On a Medallion
To Rev. Henry W. Bellows.	To Alfred B. Street

Of her sonnets Poe wrote, "Mrs. Hewitt's sonnets are upon the whole her most praiseworthy composition."¹

1. The Literati.- Edgar Allan Poe.- Vol. VIII, p.132.

Mrs. Kinney.- Mrs. E. Clementine Kinney's sonnets are on nature in her varying aspects. In the Knickerbocker Magazine of March, 1844, was found an interesting editorial which throws much light on the attitude toward the sonnet at this time. "How many borrowed passages," said the writer, "have we seen with their original brightness dimmed or reflected in a sorry sonnet! Nine in ten of our modern examples in this kind, when one comes to analyze them, will be found to consist of stolen ideas, combined with what Southey would call 'bubble and bladder and tympany.' Ever since the fatal days of Petrarch mankind have suffered more or less from the chronic inflictions of sonnets....The disorder is now rooted among us;..every week produces decided cases of sonnets, sometimes so severe as to be intolerable.....

"The first step in the production of a sonnet is the selection of rhymes. Fourteen of these in their proper order should be written perpendicularly on the right hand of a smooth sheet of white paper. Where this is done, it is necessary to read them over, up and down, several times, until some general idea of a subject or title suggests itself."

The writer then cautions all who write sonnets to be careful about the selection of their rhymes, avoiding the coupling of such words as moon and spoon, breeze, cheese and sneeze; hope and soap as there might be difficulty in bringing them together harmoniously.

The editor then makes a comparison between the manufacture of a needle and of a sonnet. He contends that the way to render a sonnet pointed and sharp, to insure it against cutting the thread

of its argument, the work should be performed by two or more.

"It is absurd," he says, "for one workman to do both rhyming and thinking. Take any 'matter-full' author, cut out a juicy slice of his thought, and make that your material. Train it, turn it, and twist it, vary it in any way but the author's own, and you will be likely to effect a speedy and wholesome operation. A man may be sure then, that a sonnet shall contain a thought...With the fourteenth pang his anxiety shall be over, and he shall drop¹ asleep satisfied."

Evidently the editor had very little faith in the sonnet, and still less in the Americans as sonnet writers.

Hans von Spiegel.- Hans von Spiegel wrote for the Knickerbocker Magazine for a few years preceding 1850. His sonnets are worthy of mention because almost all are written in the Elizabethan form. His subjects are varied:

To the Polar Star	Delia
The Portrait Gallery	June, Etc.
To the Old Year	

Mackellar.- Thomas Mackellar's sonnets are significant because of the variety of verse forms he used. His subjects are commonplace.

Other Writers.- Park Benjamin, Wilson Conworth, Henry A. Buckingham, H. T. Tuckerman, R. L. Chilton, G. P. Tyler, Esquire, T. W. Parsons, Rufus Henry Bacon and others contributed sonnets to the Knickerbocker Magazine during the ten or twelve years preceding

1. "Some Sentiments on Sonnets." - Knickerbocker Magazine, March, 1844. Vol. XXIII, pp 284-285.

1850. But we shall not take the time and space to treat each of the Knickerbocker sonnet writers in detail. A number of them contributed only one sonnet^{each}; some gave only the initials of their names; while many wrote anonymously.

Rhyme schemes.- After an examination of over two-hundred and twenty sonnets found in the North American Review between 1815 and 1850, and the Knickerbocker Magazine between 1833 and 1850, the following tables of rhyme schemes have been formulated.

Petrarchan form.

(a) North American Review.

a b b a a b b a c d c d e e (2)

(b) Knickerbocker Magazine.

c d e c d e (6)

c d e c e d

c d d e e c

c d c d e e (2)

c d d e d e

c d d c e e

a b b a a b b a

c d c d c d (10)

c d e e c d

c d d c c d

c d d e d e

c d c d c c

c d d c d c (5)

The Petrarchan form was used in all, then, thirty-three (33) times.

Elizabethan form.

(a) No sonnets of the Elizabethan type were found in the North American Review.

(b) Knickerbocker Magazine.

a b a b c d c d e f e f g g (42)

Miscellaneous forms.

(a) North American Review.

a b b a a c c a d e d e f f

a b b a c c d d c e e c f f

a b b a b a a c d d c d e e

a b b a c c d e e d f g g f

a b b a a c d d c e f f e f

a b b a a b c c b d d b e e

a b a a b b c c d e d e d d

a b c a b c d e d d e f e f

a b a c c d c d d e d e f f

(b) Knickerbocker Magazine.

d e e d f f (12)

d e e d d d (2)

d e e d e d (7)

d d e e f f (2)

a b b a a c c a

d d e f f e

d e f g d f

d e f g e g

d e f d e f

a b b a b c c b c d e d c e
 d e d e f f
 d e e d f f (3)

 d e e d f f (2)
 e f e f f g
 e e f g f g
 a b b a c d d c e f e f g g (4)
 e f f e g g (19)
 e f g e f g
 e e f f g g
 e f f e f e

a b b a a c a c d e d e d e
 a b b a c c d e e d f f g g
 a b b a a c a c d e e d f f
 a b b a b a b c c d c d c e
 a b b a c b b c d d e f e f
 a b b a c c d c e d e d f f
 a b b a c c d d e f f e g g
 a b b a c d c e d e f g g f
 a b b a c d c d e f f e g g
 a b b a c d c d d e d e f f
 a b b a c d c d e e f g f g

a b b a a b b c d c d c e e
 a b b a a b b c d d c c d d

a b b a a b a b c d c d e e

a b b a a b a b c d d c e e

a b a b b c b c d e d e d e

a b a b b c b c d e d e f f (2)

a b a b b c b c c d c d e e

a b a b c c d e e d d f f d

a b a b c c d e e d f g g f (2)

a b a b c c d e d e f f g g (2)

a b a b c c d e d e f g g f

a b a b c c d d c e e f f c

a b a b c c d d e e f f g g

a b a b c d c d e e f g f g (3)

a b a b c d c d e e f f g g

a b a b c d c d e f e f e e

a b a b c d c d e f e f f f

a b a b c d c d e d e f g f

a b a b c b c b d e e d f f

a b a b c b c b d e e f f

a b a b b c c b b d b d e e

a b a b b c c b d e d e d e

a b a b b c d c d e f e f f (2)

a b a b b c d c d e f e f g

a b a b b a b a c d e d e e

a b a b b a b a c d c d c d

a b a b c d e d c d f e f e

a b a b a b c d c d c d d c

a b a b a b a b c c b d b d

a b a b c d d c e f e f g g

a b a b b c b d c d e d f f

a b a b c a c d a e e f f f

a b a b b c d d e f e f f f

a b a b c d e c d e f e f f

a b a b c c b d e d e f f f

a b a b c c a d d a e e f f

a b a b b b c c d d e e f f

a b a b c d d c e f f e g (5)

a a b b c c d d e f e f g g (2)

a a b b c c d d e e f f g g (2)

a b a c b c c d e d e f f f

a a a a b c b c d d e f e f

a a b b a c c a c a c a a a

a a b b c c d d d d e e f f

a a b c b d e e e f g f h h

a a b c b c d e d e f f g g

a a b c b c d e e d f g g f

In the miscellaneous forms the final couplet

f f is found forty-one (41) times;

g g is found forty-three (43) times;

e e is found nine (9) times:

d d is found four (4) times;

h h is found one (1) time;

a a is found one (1) time;

a a occurs eight (8) times at the beginning of a sonnet.

Careless construction.- We see, therefore, that there is a marked tendency toward the final couplet. Again, the great variety of rhyme schemes proves conclusively that many of these writers were careless in the construction of their sonnets. The mastery of the technique of the sonnet, the clothing of a complete thought in fourteen lines with certain definite rhymes, called for more skill than many of them possessed. Consequently, the legitimate models of the sonnet were neglected for those freer forms which happened to suit the fancy of the writer. In justice to several of these writers, however, we must add, that they possessed marked ability in the treatment of the regular models. Mrs. Embury, for example, wrote in the Elizabethan form, "Quince" and Hans von Spiegel with only one or two exceptions, followed the same form. Mrs. Stedman, on the other hand, used the Petrarchan form exclusively.

Subject matter.- Again, most of these minor sonneteers show a great variety in the choice of their subjects. The most

trivial, as well as the most inspiring themes, were alike treated in the sonnet. In the "Cabinet Pictures" of "Quince," for instance, "Blushes" and "Bed" and "Autumn" are given the same general treatment without any consideration of the real value of the subjects. Now and then, a writer treated a single subject, as for example, William Pitt Palmer, who wrote a series of sonnets, "To the Housatonic." The sonnets of the home by Mrs. Stedman, and those on nature by Mrs. Kidney, are also exceptions to the general rule.

Most sonnets were written between 1835 and 1850.- It is interesting to notice, furthermore, that with only a few exceptions, all of the two hundred and twenty (220) or more sonnets examined in the two magazines, were written in the period between 1835 and 1850, the year in which Longfellow produced his first five original sonnets. These years, then, so far as our study shows, were the most productive of sonnets in the first half of the nineteenth century in America.

Critical attitude toward the sonnet.-- Finally, the editorials found in the two magazines, show the critical attitude toward the sonnet during the decade between 1840 and 1850. Little faith was placed in the sonnet because of its hard and fast rules, which were felt to be too exacting for the English language. Nevertheless, these sharp criticisms did not deter our minor poets from making a frequent display of their poetical ability in the sonnet.

Conclusion.-

Longfellow, then, is America's most successful sonneteer. He not only gave us the largest number of sonnets, but he also

proved himself a careful master of the regular sonnet forms as no other of our poets has done. Again, in the beauty of language, and in the simplicity and sincerity of the treatment of his thoughts and emotions in the sonnet, Longfellow has never been excelled.

Lowell, with fewer sonnets, and with less skill in the mastery of the regular forms, especially in the early part of his career, stands next to Longfellow. Whittier and Holmes wrote sonnets, but few in number in proportion to the rest of their works. The former shows a freedom of treatment in all of his sonnets, while the latter, in general, followed the regular models.

Emerson neglected the sonnet almost entirely. The one original poem that might be called a sonnet, and the translation from Michael Angelo, show that he could not confine himself to the narrow limits of the sonnet, and that he preferred those forms which admit of greater freedom of treatment.

The minor American sonneteers followed no one form. They were careless of the rules of the sonnet to an unpardonable degree. That the sonnet was popular in America during the first half of the nineteenth century, is shown by the great number that were produced during this period.

In the material included in our study, then, the American sonnet shows, with only several exceptions, a careless treatment of the regular forms, and in many cases, a superficial treatment of trivial subject matter.

Bibliography.

Poetical Works:

- Emerson, Ralph Waldo, Complete Works, Vol. IX, Boston,
Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1904.
- Holmes, Oliver Wendell, Poetical Works, III Vols., Boston
Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1899.
- Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth, Poetical Works, VI Vols., Boston,
Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1900.
- Lowell, James Russell, Poetical Works, IV Vols., Boston,
Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1891.
- Whittier, John Greenleaf, Poetical Works, IV Vols., Boston,
Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1888.

Histories of Literature:

- Griswold, Rufus Wilmot, Poets and Poetry of America,
Philadelphia, 1847.
- Lawton, William Cranston, The New England Poets, New York,
Macmillan Co., 1898.
- Onderdonk, James L., History of American Verse, Chicago,
McClurg and Co., 1901.
- Richardson, Charles F., American Literature, II Vols., New York
Putnam's Sons, 1889.
- Stedman, Edmund Clarence, and Hutchinⁿson, Ellen Mackay, A Lib-
rary of American Literature, X Vols., New York,
Charles A. Webster and Co., 1889.
- Tyler, Moses Coit, A History of American Literature, II Vols.,
New York, Putnam's Sons, 1879.

Wendell, Barret, A Literary History of America, New York,
Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901.

Wendell, Barrett, and Greenough, Chester Noyes, A History of
Literature in America, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901.

Dictionaries and Cyclopaedias:

Adams, Oscar Fay, A Dictionary of American Authors, Boston,
Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1905.

Allibone, L. Austin, Dictionary of Authors, III Vols.,
Philadelphia, Childs and Peterson, 1859.

Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography, Revised Edition,
VII. Vols., New York, D. Appleton and Co., 1900.

Cushing, William, Initials and Pseudonyms, New York,
Thomas Y. Crowell and Co., 1885.

Drake, Francis S., Dictionary of American Biography, Boston,
James R. Osgood and Co., 1872.

Ducykinck, Evert A., and George L., Cyclopedia of American
Literature, II Vols., New York, Charles Scribner, 1866.

The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, XII Vols.,
James L. White and Co., 1906.

Spanish Literature:

Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, M. Rivadeneyra, - Editor,
Madrid, 1870 - 1906.

Ticknor, George, History of Spanish Literature, III Vols.,
Boston, Ticknor and Fields, 1863.

French Literature:

Les Poètes Français, quatre Volumes, Paris, 1863.

Biography and Letters:

- Longfellow, Samuel, Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow,
III Vols., Boston, Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1893.
Lowell, James Russell, Letters edited by Charles Eliot Norton,
II Vols., New York, Harper and Bros., 1894.
Scudder, Horace Elisha, James Russell Lowell, A Biography,
II Vols., Boston, Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1901.

Magazines:

- The Knickerbocker Magazine, XXXIV Vols., (Vols. III and VI
missing from library), 1833 - 1850, New York.
North American Review LXXI Vols., 1815 - 1850, Boston.
The Pioneer, James Russell Lowell and R. Carter, 1843, Boston,
Leland and Whiting, 1843.

Verse:

- Alden, Raymond Macdonald, English Verse, New York, 1903.

Sonnets:

- Hunt, Leigh and Lee, S. Adams, The Book of the Sonnet, II Vols.
London, Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, 1867.
Symonds, John Addington, The Sonnets of Michael Angelo,
Portland, Maine, Thomas B. Mosher, 1901.

Criticism:

- Poe, Edgar Allan, The Works of, edited by E. C. Stedman and
G. E. Woodberry, X Vols., Chicago,
Stone and Kimball, 1894.





UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



3 0112 086856959